

VZCZCXRO0329  
OO RUEHDA  
DE RUEHAK #1897/01 3051522  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 311522Z OCT 08  
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7853  
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC//PA  
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU  
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 9271  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 4916  
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 3345  
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 6947  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 6791  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3366  
RUEUITH/DET 1 39LG ANKARA TU  
RHMFISS/USDOCO 6ATAF IZMIR TU  
RHMFISS/39OS INCIRLIK AB TU  
RHMFISS/AFOSI DET 523 IZMIR TU  
RHMFISS/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU  
RHMFISS/AFOSI DET 522 INCIRLIK AB TU  
RUEUITH/AFLO ANKARA TU

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 001897

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL  
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2008

In Today's Papers

Somali Pirates Hijack Turkish Ship

All papers: Somali pirates carrying heavy weapons attacked the ship "YA/SA Neslihan" in the Gulf of Aden and captured 20 Turkish crew members. The ship belongs to Yalcin Sabanci of the Sabanci family and it was carrying 77,000 tones of iron ore to China. Reportedly, the pirates snuck up on the ship with speed boats before they climbed aboard. The captain of the ship only could send a message saying, "We are being hijacked." Mainstream Vatan reports that the pirates off the shores of Somalia have hijacked 73 ships this year. Mainstream Hurriyet reports that Turkish Foreign Ministry called on NATO security forces to help rescue 20 Turkish crew members.

World Economic Forum/IMF

News outlets cover the World Economic Forum by highlighting the remarks from the participants, including by PM Erdogan. Islamist Yeni Safak reports Prime Minister Erdogan called for international cooperation and unity. Liberal Radikal notes Ersin Ozince called on the government to take steps to improve Turkey's financial credibility.

In "Energy Support from America," Yeni Safak also noted Assistant Secretary of Energy Jeff Kupfer's participation to the conference by reports, "The U.S. administration is trying to set up a working mechanism in order to support Turkey's projects on energy."

All papers also highlight Minister of State in charge of economic affairs Mehmet Simsek's remarks on the possibility of making a stand-by agreement with the IMF. Reports quote Minister Simsek during the WEF meetings in Istanbul, who reiterated the good shape of the Turkish economy and the government's consideration of making a stand-by agreement with the IMF as a precaution. Turkey and the IMF will continue their talks during the G-20 meetings, the Minister added. Milliyet calls those remarks a move "Toward Agreement with IMF" while Radikal considers the approach "a green light to the IMF."

Ergun Babahan wrote in mainstream Sabah: "International interest in the World Economic Forum in Istanbul this year was rather high."

This year's forum coincided with the global financial crisis. Turkey is the key country to transfer the natural gas from the Center Asia to the world markets. Turkey's strong and deep relationship with the region is a big advantage for Turkey. As a European diplomat said at the forum, "Facing a strong winter with no gas will be enough reason for Europe to speed up Turkey's EU negotiations."

Murat Belge wrote about "The IMF and Style" in leftist Taraf: "Since the PM warned the IMF that Turkey would only consider an agreement as long as "they don't tighten their grips on our throats," I've seen several people caution against such language. The Bretton Woods Conference that established the IMF is not a socialist council that deals out an excessive amount of sympathy. The PM himself and his party is in an historical situation regarding Turkey's political policy and they say they represent civil society. They should be objective and it is in the interest of the government to give a real voice to the people. Some of the things this party says are not in its own interests or in the interests of the Turkish people."

Fuller: We Are No Longer an Ally  
News outlets are surprised by the comments of former CIA official Graham Fuller at the Jamestown Association's conference on Turkey and the Caucasus after the war in Georgia. Mainstream Hurriyet carries the headline, "From Now On, We Are No Longer an Ally," and reports, "Fuller said that the bilateral friendship and working relationship between Turkey and the U.S. will continue," but noted, "the two countries have different foreign policy goals," as "the U.S. prefers isolationist policies towards countries like Iran and

ANKARA 00001897 002 OF 003

Syria," while Turkey "seeks to expand its influence through improved relations with its neighbors." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports in "Turkey is no longer an American Ally," that "For the first time in a century, Turkey is emerging as a formidable regional power." In "From Now On, Turkey is a Regional Power," Islamist Yeni Safak reports, "As one of the CIA's highest ranking officials and a man who knows Turkey, Fuller says relations between the U.S. and Turkey are good, but Turkey is no longer an ally." Liberal Radikal carries the headline "Fuller: Turkey is no longer an American Ally," and reports, "Fuller also criticized U.S. hegemony after 9/11."

#### U.S. Elections

All news outlets feature confident reports on the presidential race in the U.S. as if Obama is the inevitable winner. Coverage ranges from shockingly wide margins of victory in national polls to Obama's plans for his phantom cabinet. Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "If Obama Wins, He Will Include Republicans in His Cabinet." In addition, the paper notes, "Because of the global economic crisis and the situations in Afghanistan and Iraq, it will be necessary for (Obama to take) initiative early on." Mainstream Milliyet reports, "With 96 hours remaining until Election Day," Obama is, "in the final stretch of an election marathon that began in February 2007." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports in "Time is Running Out for McCain," that "Observers say that, barring some extraordinary event, Obama is the likely winner." Leftist Taraf quotes former President Bill Clinton in its headline, "It's Clear that Obama Will Be President." Liberal Radikal reports in "The Heart of White America Says Obama Could Take 55% of the Vote," and notes, "At Harvard, the Ivory Tower, Obama joy is stirring," because "some polls show Obama to be at least ten points ahead."

Columnist Ferai Tinc of mainstream Hurriyet notes, "The winner will have to deal with a colossal economic crisis and foreign policy will remain an important priority. No matter who wins, Turkey will be asked to settle its Kurdish problem because the United States considers this problem as a contributor to instability in northern Iraq. It looks like the level of support from the new American administration toward the AKP government will depend on the steps taken by Ankara in this regard."

#### Anti-U.S. Demonstrations in Syria

All news outlets focus coverage of the protests in Damascus and highlight the chilling slogans chanted against the U.S. Mainstream Hurriyet reports, "In Syria, A Protest of Curses against the U.S."

Islamist oriented Yeni Safak carries the headline, "Syria's Rage Grows," as "tens of thousands of Syrians fill the streets to condemn the U.S. attack on Syrian soil." Mainstream Milliyet notes that protestors shouted slogans such as "Where is the U.N.?" and "The U.S. is the Face of Zionism," as "the crowds were a cross-section of society, including students, workers, and religious leaders." Mainstream Sabah reports, "due to security reasons, the U.S. Embassy in Damascus was closed." Leftist Taraf reports, "Syria's Rage Fills the Streets," as protesters shouted "No to American Terror." Liberal Radikal reports, "Syria is overflowing with Rage at the U.S."

#### Editorial opinion on PKK and Kurdish Issue

Rusen Cakir wrote in mainstream Vatan: "Since General Basbug took charge of TGS, some great changes in the state's stance against terrorism are evident. Nevertheless, there are still a few missing details like a refusal to acknowledge the "Kurdish issue," a lack of understanding regarding the structure of the PKK and its ability to recruit youth, and concerns regarding the relationship with the Iraqi Kurds. However, it is still not very clear what will be asked from Barzani and Talabani, what they will say, what will they do, and what will happen if they don't keep their promises."

Mehmet Yilmaz wrote in Islamist leaning Zaman: "I am of the opinion that contacts with KRG President Massoud Barzani are positive, but I

ANKARA 00001897 003 OF 003

do not think that these contacts will result in anything concrete. The Kurdish leaders in Iraq, i.e. Barzani and Talabani, seek an independent Kurdish state. Both of these leaders are playing with time in order to reach this ultimate goal. Despite Talabani-Barzani promises of "active" support to Turkey, they are not putting an end to PKK presence in northern Iraq. At the same time, will contacts with Barzani lead to an end to the PKK? But, what have past leaders, like 10th President Sezer, actually gained from not inviting Talabani to Ankara?"

Ismet Berkan wrote in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "The military's and the AKP's suggestion to establish an Undersecretary for terrorism is not a solution to the Kurdish problem. What must the administration do? After tens of thousands of our citizens have lost their lives, the least we can do is find a modern legal solution to the issue. The struggle with 'terror' and 'terrorists' is not the duty of the military, but of the government."

TV News  
CNNTurk

Domestic  
DTP leader Ahmet Turk rejects reports that his party sought the establishment of Kurdish federation in Turkey.

The reading of Ergenekon indictment continues in the court.

The head of DTP branch in Midyat, Aziz Bilgin, was arrested for inciting hatred.

The police officer responsible for the death of a young person in Antalya says that the killing was an "accident."

Prime Minister Erdogan brings together Afghanistan's President Karzai and Pakistan's Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani in Istanbul to discuss cooperation for stability and development in the region.

Three students were taken into custody in Ankara for staging protests against President Abdullah Gul.

The suit filed against Osman Hayal for membership in a terror organization is combined with the suit against the murderers of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink.

Bursa Directorate for Social Services prepares to object to a forensics report saying that the 14-year old girl raped by Islamist writer Huseyin Uzmez suffered no emotional or physical damage.

Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul, paying a visit to Israel, says Israeli drones will be delivered to Turkey in the beginning of 2009.

#### World

Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani, during a visit to Washington, sends a message of friendship to Turkey.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will visit Egypt, Jordan, Israel and Palestine next week.

Bill Clinton, America's 42nd president told a rally in Florida, "Barack Obama represents America's future, and this man should be our president."

65 people are killed and about 300 injured in 12 bombings across the eastern Indian state of Assam.

WILSON